



# *Quick Reads*

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## **2008 legislative season gets underway**

During his January 15 [Condition of the State Address](#), Governor Culver introduced his FY 2009 budget recommendations and emphasized the need to address a number of health issues in 2008. The Governor proposed expanding health care for children, making health care more affordable and accessible, setting the standard for electronic medical records and telemedicine, increasing pay for nurses, and promoting healthy lifestyles. He also said that he would sign a bill to ban smoking at the local level. Governor Culver's final comment on the issue of health during his speech was one of "walking the walk;" in this case, encouraging state employees to participate in the 100-Day Culver/Judge Lighten Up Iowa Challenge. Thanks to the Governor's leadership, 1,541 State employees are now competing with one another in 221 weight loss and/or physical activity teams.

In terms of the Governor's budget for public health, Governor Culver has outlined \$75,000 in new funding for the Governor's Physical Fitness Challenge; accepted IDPH's request of \$900,000 in reallocated funds for healthy communities grants; proposed \$1 million of new funding for immunizations; and outlined \$400,000 to implement HF908 passed last session, which requires IDPH to establish a Plumbers and Mechanical Professionals licensing board. The new funding represents approximately a 4 percent increase in FY 2009 for IDPH compared to the previous year.

To keep your finger on the pulse of public health issues being addressed during the 2008 session, I encourage readers to subscribe to the department's [Legislative Updates](#). To do so, please send a blank e-mail to [join-IDPHLEGUPDATE@lists.ia.gov](mailto:join-IDPHLEGUPDATE@lists.ia.gov). Please note that we'll be delivering these Updates to you directly in the content of

the e-mail this year, so please take a moment to join the list. If you'd rather not be on the mailing list, the Updates are always available online at [www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/legislative\\_updates.asp](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/legislative_updates.asp).

### **Calls to Quitline Iowa in 2008 already close to surpassing last year's total**

On January 1, IPDH began offering free nicotine patches and gum to Iowans who called Quitline Iowa (1-800-QUIT-NOW) for help breaking their addiction to cigarettes and spit tobacco. I am happy to say that in the first three weeks of 2008, Quitline Iowa has already received 5,031 calls, which is nearly the total number received during the entire 2007 fiscal year. More than 2,500 of those who called Quitline Iowa for help have requested the free nicotine patches or gum. Even more encouraging is that nearly 4,300 callers have enrolled in coaching services through Quitline Iowa, thereby greatly increasing their chances for success. Congratulations to the thousands of Iowans who have decided to make 2008 the year they say no to tobacco and yes to improved health. For more information, please call 1-800-784-8669 (1-800-QUIT-NOW).

### **2007 IDPH Annual Report and Budget Summary released**

Now available at [www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/annual\\_reports.asp](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/annual_reports.asp), the department's 2007 annual report is a valuable reference for public health workers and partners. Here you will find detailed descriptions of the programs and services that help IDPH achieve its mission of promoting and protecting the health of Iowans. I'm happy to say that this year's report has also been enhanced in many regards. For example, each program profile now includes information on which goals created by the [Iowa Public Health Standards](#) it helps to achieve. Graphs have also been added to help readers understand how we measure our progress in achieving those goals.

### **Health and Long Term Care Workforce Review and Recommendations report complete**

During the 2007 Iowa legislative session House File 909 was enacted, which required IDPH, in cooperation with other specified state agencies, to examine and report on health and long-term care workforce issues in Iowa. This [report](#) was recently completed and includes findings and recommendations from IDPH and a wide variety of health care professionals. To access the report, please visit [www.idph.state.ia.us](http://www.idph.state.ia.us) and look under Topics of Interest.

### **Census report indicates a rise in poverty in Iowa**

The level of economic resources is considered to be one of the most powerful social determinants of health status. In a recently issued U.S. Census report, 308,713 Iowans were in poverty in 2005. That's a jump of 30 percent since 2000.

As you consider which factors affect the overall health of your community, I encourage you to refer to data available from the [State Data Center of Iowa](#). For county-level data, please visit <http://data.iowadatacenter.org/browse/counties.html#Poverty> and refer to “Small Area Estimates.” To compare your county to state data, visit <http://data.iowadatacenter.org/browse/state.html#Poverty> and again refer to “Small Area Estimates.”

**We want your best practices**

IDPH is committed to telling the citizens of Iowa about the good things public health is doing to make a difference. To do this, we want to highlight your best practices/success stories. Please send your ideas to Don McCormick at [dmccormi@idph.state.ia.us](mailto:dmccormi@idph.state.ia.us).

*To everyone in public health and all our partners—keep up the great work!*  
*Tom*